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ABSTRACT

A serious shortage of qualified health care professionals is forcing hospitals and health care agencies to undertake costly recruitment and hiring of foreign nurses and other health care professionals to meet staffing needs. Hospitals in Dade County spend from $2,900 to $20,000 per recruit, not including salary. The Health Careers Project for People in Public Housing (HCP) seeks to bridge the educational and training needs of individuals on public assistance with waiting job opportunities in the health care setting. The HCP operates as a partnership between the Medical Center Campus, the Private Industry Council/South Florida Employment Training Consortium, and the Metro-Dade Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Education and training are provided in four program areas: Phlebotomy, Respiratory Therapy Assistant, Medical Record Transcription, and Medical Assistant. The program provides funds for tuition, books, fees, and uniforms, as well as support for child care, transportation, and meal allowances. In addition to academic courses, the program offers follow-up counseling on financial management and provides information on low-mortgage home ownership plans. Following a period of recruitment and orientation, instruction began in October 1990 with a total of 41 students. The 10 students in the 180-hour Phlebotomy program were female, single heads of household who were not employed prior to the program. All 10 students graduated on schedule 2 months later, and 100% were subsequently employed with starting salaries of at least $16,640. A profile of three program graduates, and an enrollment information flyer are included. (PAA)

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Health Careers Project for People in Public Housing
Executive Summary

Medical Center Campus
Miami-Dade Community College

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEALTH CAREERS PROJECT FOR PEOPLE IN PUBLIC HOUSING
MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS
MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The quality of American society will be enhanced only when it decides to end unhealthy, economic dependencies. A critical yet challenging step in that direction is to free individuals from the present dependency-creating system of public housing and other forms of costly public assistance. Concurrently, a serious shortage of qualified health care professionals is creating a similar situation in which hospitals and health care agencies are forced to depend on foreign countries for the supply of nurses and other health professionals to meet staffing needs. Hospitals in Dade County spend from $2,900 to $20,000 per recruit, not including salary. A mechanism to bridge the educational and training needs of individuals on public assistance with waiting job opportunities in the health care setting is essential to diminishing dependency and claiming society's future.

The **Health Careers Project for People in Public Housing** provides such a mechanism through a partnership between the Medical Center Campus and the Private Industry Council (PIC)/South Florida Employment Training Consortium (SFETC) in collaboration with Metro-Dade Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The initial grant contract, awarded from May, 1990 to June, 1991, was for $133,950 with additional funds of $42,000 for supportive services. The program provides training and support services for preparing public housing and low-income residents toward employment in high-demand health care occupations. Education and training is provided in four program areas: Phlebotomy, Respiratory Therapy Assistant, Medical Record Transcription and Medical Assistant. The immediate goal is to place graduates in jobs; the distal goal is to create self-sufficient members of the community by

empowering a move out of dependency on public assistance.

Following recruitment and orientation, instruction began October 1, 1990 with a total of 41 students --- Medical Assistant (17), Medical Record Transcribing (14) and Phlebotomy (10). The Phlebotomy class of ten graduated on December 3, 1990. One hundred percent (100%) of the students are employed with annual starting salaries of $16,640. A new class began in February, 1991.

The comprehensive design of the program includes strategies to produce both immediate and long-term change. The immediate effect is employment and involvement of students in financial planning workshops aimed at low-mortgage home ownership. This strategy, however, also produces more long-term results. A generation of dependency on public housing is broken or prevented with each student who successfully exits the program. Children who are in their shadow are given a chance at a change in environment as a parent becomes financially self-reliant. And, finally, graduates of the program acquire more than just a job; they are positioned for a career ladder in health care.

The providing of funds for academic materials such as tuition, books, fees and uniforms along with support services including child care, transportation and meal allowances is an essential part of the program. Without these supports, the program could not work in addressing the needs of this special population of students. The Project is a small investment which produces large social and economic returns.

REPORT: HEALTH CAREERS FOR PEOPLE IN PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT
MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS

The quality of American society will be changed only when it decides to other unhealthy or economic dependencies. On May 22, 1990, the Board made a significant decision in that direction when it approved a grant from the Private Industry Council (PIC)/South Florida Employment and Training Consortium (SFETC) to provide training and support services for preparing public housing and low-income residents toward employment in high-demand health care occupations. The immediate goal is to place graduates in jobs; the distal goal is to create self-sufficient members of the community who, as family income increases, are empowered to move out of public housing into private home ownership.

The first class of ten (10) Phlebotomy Technicians graduated on December 3, 1990; nine are from a Metro-Dade HUD project. None of the graduates were employed prior to entering the training program. All graduates are now employed either in hospitals or other health care facilities as Phlebotomy Technicians. These are laboratory assistants who obtain blood samples from patients.

Graduates can begin with starting salaries of $15,000-$20,800. The graduates are all female, single heads of household and represent the major ethnic groups found in Dade County. There were offered employment positions prior to receiving their clinical experiences. One of the hospitals stated that "the graduate is better than the technician who has been working [there] for years."

The program was a 180-contact hour Postsecondary Adult Vocational (PSAV) program which started in September 1990. A full-time faculty member developed the curriculum which was taught by faculty and staff from the Medical Center Campus Department of Medical Laboratory Technologies. Students received their clinical experiences in six local hospitals. The PIC/SFETC grant funded the cost of each student's tuition, books, laboratory fees and uniforms. In addition, support services including child care, transportation and meal allowances were provided to each participant.

Upon employment, each participant will be followed for one to three months. During this time they will continue to receive counseling in the areas of employment skills, financial management and planning as well as information on low-mortgage home ownership plans. In addition, students will also be advised to continue toward an advanced degree in the health care field and, yet, better salaries.

Following are three (3) case studies which profile the characteristics and achievements of students who graduated from the program:

1. A 28-year-old Hispanic female with a ten-year old son was living in public housing with no additional family support. She enrolled at the Medical Center Campus for a Phlebotomy Vocational Program of 180 contact hours in length. She is exceptionally bright and a quick learner with great potential. During her clinical rotation, her supervisor indicated she could be depended upon using her judgment very effectively. As a result of her study at the Campus, she accepted employment prior to completing her clinical rotation with an annual starting salary of $15,766. She plans to continue her studies and receive an Associate in Science Degree in Medical Laboratory Technology.

2. A 30-year-old Hispanic mother of two sons was living on public assistance even though she had received training and certification in Cuba as a Medical Assistant. She was unable to obtain permanent employment in Dade County. She considered herself a "lower class citizen" due to a cultural bias she perceived existed against young individuals on public assistance. She was under great emotional stress when she entered the Phlebotomy Technician Vocational Program. She excelled in her clinical rotations and was offered several positions before accepting the best offer of $20,800. Her aspirations are to continue work toward an Associate Degree and State licensure in Medical Laboratory Technology or Nursing.

3. A 20-year-old, low-income, soft-spoken Black female was 8-months pregnant. Upon entry to the program, she developed an ability to resolve interpersonal conflicts among fellow students. The hospital where she did her clinical rotation offered her a position starting at $11,648. Several weeks later, however, she was able to obtain a position through an agency which paid $14,560. Her goal is to continue her studies while working and eventually attend medical school to become an obstetrician.

HEALTH CAREERS PROJECT FOR PEOPLE IN PUBLIC HOUSING

MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS
MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Program Description

The Health Careers Project for People in Public Housing is a partnership between the Medical Center Campus and the Private Industry Council (PIC)/South Florida Employment Training Consortium (SFETC) in collaboration with Metro-Dade Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program provides health care education and training to people living in public housing. The immediate goal is to place graduates in high-demand health care occupations; the distal goal is to create self-sufficient members of the community by empowering a move out of dependency on public assistance.

Student Description

Students are Dade County residents who live in public housing and/or receive public assistance funds. Most are single parents who have decided --- mostly in the interest of their children --- to escape from a subsistence-level dependency so often found in public housing projects.

Application and Enrollment

* Students are certified as eligible by the PIC intake process.
* Students receive pre-enrollment career advising and basic skills assessment.
* Students complete the Miami-Dade Community College enrollment process.

Course of Study

* Length of program varies with the option chosen and pre-requisites indicated.
* Program includes classroom instruction and supervised experience in a clinical setting.
* Program includes employment skills and time management training, personal counseling and numerous other practical components.
* Students must demonstrate mastery of appropriate competencies required by each profession.
* Students are placed in jobs.
* Students receive financial management counseling and information regarding low-mortgage home ownership.

Benefits

* Students acquire a marketable job skill to begin a career in health care.
* Students receive appropriate economic and emotional support during the program including funds for tuition, books, fees and uniforms along with child care, transportation and meal allowances.
* Students become economically self-sufficient.
* With each graduate, society reclaims a new generation out of public dependency to contribute to the economic and social health of the community.

Partners

* Miami-Dade Community College
* Private Industry Council (PIC)/South Florida Employment Training Consortium (SFETC)
* Metro-Dade Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Cost

* **No charge to the student**
* Total 1990-1991 Grant Funds --- $133,950
* 1990-1991 Support Service Funds --- $ 42,000
* Total costs average approximately $4,300 per student which is $3,700 less than the cost of one year's public assistance. Long-term savings and gains are incalculable.

Highlights

* Phlebotomy class of ten graduated in December and enjoys a 100% employment rate.
* Nine of the ten graduates were residents of a Metro-Dade HUD project.
* Annual starting salaries average $16,000 as compared with the annual public assistance of approximately $8,000.

Testimony

"The graduate is better than the technician who has been working (here) for years"

Comment from a Hospital Supervisor

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